

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

25 September 1974

Honorable John C. Stennis, Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have your letter of 25 September 1974, requesting my assurance that the Central Intelligence Agency will not exceed the limits of authority proposed in legislation currently before the Congress, specifically your bill, S. 2597. Without reservation, I can assure you that this Agency will abide by the letter and the spirit of S. 2597, in the conduct of our activities.

Three bills currently before Congress would insert the word "foreign" before the word "intelligence," whenever it refers to the activities authorized to be undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency. I fully support this change in the National Security Act. This Agency is not authorized to conduct activities outside the foreign intelligence field; I have attempted to insure that all Agency employees respect this fact.

In order to conduct our foreign intelligence mission, however, this Agency must undertake certain actions in the United States. S. 2597 provides for this, by expressly permitting the Agency to protect its installations, conduct personnel investigations, provide information to other agencies, and conduct activities in the United States which are necessary to support its foreign intelligence mission. Of course, these domestic activities could not contravene the proscription against police, law enforcement, or internal security functions. Such authorized domestic activities include: (a) interviewing American citizens who are willing, voluntarily and without pay, to

share foreign intelligence information in their possession with their Government; (b) collecting foreign intelligence from foreigners in the United States; (c) establishing support structures necessary to foreign intelligence operations abroad; and (d) providing technical assistance to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for its counterintelligence operations against foreigners.

S. 2597 would specifically require the Agency to report to the Congress on all activities undertaken pursuant to section 102(d)(5) of the National Security Act in the manner established by the Congress. I fully subscribe to this requirement. The longstanding precedent is that we report CIA operational and budget matters only to the named Subcommittees of the House and Senate Armed Services and Appropriations Committees. I will continue to abide by this precedent unless and until it is modified by the Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure you that this Agency will scrupulously confine its activities to the foreign intelligence field, and will report these activities to Congress, under procedures established by the Congress. This is required under your proposed legislation, and it conforms to my view of the proper role of an intelligence agency in a democratic society.

Sincerely,

/s/

W. E. Colby  
Director